

TIPS FOR SHOPPING WITH YOUR CHILD

Anyone who has shopped at a grocery store or a mall with children – especially young children – knows that the experience can sometimes be trying, even highly stressful.

Here are some steps that can change potential misery into potential mastery of shopping with kids.

Plan Ahead:

- **Check attitudes** – Is your child too tired or hungry to shop? Are you? If yes, postpone your trip or find a sitter for your child(ren).
- **Explain the Rules** – Before entering the store make your expectations clear, such as “Stay close to me” and “Use your quiet voice.”
- **Agree on Rewards for Good Behavior** – Keep it simple, such as a choice of a favorite snack food, or a stop at the park. Promise to read a story or play a game at home.



At the Store:

- **Make a Game Out of Shopping** – Who can see the bananas? Who can find the shoe store first? Who can see a person wearing red? Which store begins with the letter “t”?
- **Give Children Some Choices** – When possible, allow your child(ren) to make some decisions. Blue or red socks? Chocolate or vanilla ice cream? Be prepared to bargain or compromise.
- **Play** – “I see something.” Then ask your child(ren) what it is.
- **Praise Your Child** – “You are being so helpful.” A hug can be reassuring and say more than words at times.

If All Else Fails:

Remember: Kids will be kids – they are not perfect. Of course, neither are we, but we are the adults.

- Ignore inappropriate behavior unless it becomes dangerous, destructive, annoying to others or truly embarrassing.
- Remove a child who is out of control. Take him to the restroom or out of the store. Tell the child quietly, eye-to-eye, that bad behavior is absolutely unacceptable.
- Wait (say nothing at all) for the child to calm down, then ask if he is ready to try again.
- Go home if the child cannot calm down. If the shopping cannot wait, find a sitter and return alone.

Child Protective Services Hotline

703-324-7400 • TTY 703-222-9452 • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs



Fairfax County's
BLUE RIBBON Campaign ...Keeping Kids Safe
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childrenyouth/blueribbon.htm



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